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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001864

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE - IRANIAN PRESIDENT'S INCREASING EXTREMISM

REF: STATE 199225

Classified By: Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (SBU) The Ambassador raised reftel points on Ahmadi-Nejad's October 25 remarks on wiping Israel off the map with Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Anura Bandanaraike during an October 28 conversation (other subjects reported septel). Bandanaraike was not familiar with the Iranian president's speech but nodded in agreement as the Ambassador outlined U.S. concerns with the remarks about Israel as well as Iranian nuclear conduct, interference in Iraq and poor respect for human rights and democratic principles. The Foreign Minister instructed his staff to get him a copy of the speech (which he termed a "very serious statement") and listened carefully as the Ambassador outlined which countries had already made public condemnations of Ahmadi-Nejad's statement and urged that Sri Lanka consider doing the same.

2. (C) The Ambassador also raised our desire for Sri Lankan support regarding Iran in the IAEA. Bandanaraike said he had appreciated his September discussions on the subject with U/S Joseph in New York and appeared receptive to the Ambassador's point that the IAEA should refer Iran to the UN Security Council.

3. (C) Comment: The new Foreign Minister clearly understood and sympathized with our concerns regarding Iran. However, it is a fact that Sri Lanka receives large quantities of subsidized petroleum from Iran, which will make Colombo reluctant to get too far out in front on this issue.

LUNSTEAD